

Use commas after introductory words or mild interjections such as *no*, *yes*, *oh*, and *well*; after introductory prepositional phrases that contain additional prepositional phrases; after adverbial clauses or adverbs used as introductory elements; and after introductory infinitives or participial phrases.

No, I haven't heard the latest weather report.

From a report on the radio, I learned that a tornado has been sighted.

Although I know they are dangerous, I find tornadoes exciting.

To protect myself against the tornado, I went to the basement.

Listening to the roar of the wind, I began to get nervous.

Use commas to set off words of direct address, such as names and titles. Use commas to set off parenthetical expressions—words that interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence—and to separate a question tagged onto a sentence at the end.

By the way, Grace, you opened the windows a crack, didn't you?

Use commas to set off nonessential clauses and participial phrases and nonessential appositives and appositive phrases.

My house, which doesn't have a basement, is newer than yours, an old colonial.

Use a comma before the conjunction that joins the two independent clauses of a compound sentence.

A tornado touched down, but it skipped over our neighborhood.

In a series of three or more, use a comma after every item in the series except the last one. Use a comma between two or more adjectives of equal rank that modify the same noun.

After the strong, unexpected storm, we surveyed our house, our yard, and our neighborhood.

Using Commas Correctly

Insert commas where necessary in the following sentences.

1. Braving the blinding snow and bitter cold I shoveled the driveway the sidewalk and the steps this morning.
2. Light the candles Reece because we lost electricity.
3. The schools are canceled today and they will probably be closed again tomorrow because of the snowstorm.
4. Well we should consider ourselves lucky that the farm suffered only minor damage from the storm.
5. Mr. Cafarella this blizzard was worse than the last one don't you agree?
6. On the contrary this storm was mild compared to the ones I lived through when I was a boy.
7. In the middle of the night I awoke because the wind was making so much noise.
8. Looking out the window I began to suspect that this was no ordinary storm.
9. The road crews which stand by when bad weather is predicted were busy all night.
10. When the wind and snow finally stopped we all came out to survey the damage.